

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 059120
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TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 059120

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: APER, MARR, XF, UN

SUBJECT: SECURITY AND SAFETY OF UN MILITARY OBSERVERS
IN LEBANON

REF: A) TEL AVIV 2942
B) USUN 759
C) BEIRUT 1195
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 059120

D) USUN 793 (NOTAL)
E) TEL AVIV 3003
F) JERUSALEM 665
G) JERUSALEM 674

1. AMBASSADOR LEWIS' STRONG REMARKS TO WEIZMAN AND
BEGIN ABOUT DETERIORATING SOUTHERN LEBANON SITUATION

(REFS A AND E) WERE MOST TIMELY AND SHOULD SERVE TO FOCUS HIGH-LEVEL ISRAELI ATTENTION ON WHAT HAS BECOME TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE HARASSMENT OF UN OBSERVERS. USUN'S FOLLOW-UP ACTION (REFS B AND D) HAS USEFULLY ENGAGED OTHER UNTSO CONTRIBUTORS IN REPRESENTATIONS TO CONCERNED PARTIES AND HAS EVIDENTLY PERSUADED UN SECRETARIAT TO GET SIILASVUO TO MOVE MORE QUICKLY ON THIS PROBLEM. IN ADDITION, EMBASSY BEIRUT'S ACTION (REF C) SHOULD SENSITIZE LEBANESE (INCLUDING CHRISTIANS) TO OUR CONCERN.

2. WE HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TO MAKE SURE ALL PARTIES FULLY UNDERSTAND OUR STRONG CONCERN AND OUR UNWILLINGNESS TO TOLERATE ACTION OR IN-ACTION ON THE PART OF THOSE CONCERNED THAT EXACERBATES THE SITUATION:

A) CONGEN JERUSALEM SHOULD DISCUSS SITUATION WITH SIILASVUO TO ENSURE THAT HE HAS CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF HIS PRIMARY ROLE IN BRINGING THIS MATTER TO ATTENTION OF ISRAELIS AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY IN FUTURE. WE ALSO SUGGEST YOU EXPLORE EMBASSY BEIRUT PROPOSAL (REF C) THAT HE VISIT LEBANON SOON FOR FIRST-HAND SURVEY OF THE SITUATION AND TO REMIND PARTIES CONCERNED THAT UNTSO PLANS TO REMAIN IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 059120

B) USUN MAY WISH TO EXPLORE VISIT TO LEBANON WITH URQUHART, ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ACCOMPANY SIILASVUO. HE MAY, HOWEVER, WANT TO URGE SIILASVUO TO UNDERTAKE THE SURVEY.

C) FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER: YOU SHOULD CONTINUE YOUR EFFORTS TO HAVE LEBANESE MILITARY EXERT WHATEVER IN-FLUENCE THEY CAN OVER MAJOR HADDAD.

D) FOR AMBASSADOR MURPHY: THE SYRIANS MAY BE AWARE OF RECENT MEETINGS IN NEW YORK ON UNTSO AND THE VIEW EXPRESSED BY THE SWEDISH DELEGATION THAT UNTSO SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON. WE WANT TO BE SURE THEY KNOW THAT WE SUPPORT CONTINUED EFFECTIVE UNTSO OPERATIONS. WE ALSO WANT THEM TO KNOW OF OUR CONCERNS FOR THE SAFETY OF UNTSO PERSONNEL, AND TO SUGGEST THAT THEY WEIGH IN WITH THE PALESTINIANS. AT YOUR DISCRETION, YOU SHOULD THEREFORE GIVE KHADDAM OR OTHER APPROPRIATE SYRIAN OFFICIAL A COPY OF THE LATEST UN REPORT, PER USUN 734, AND MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- THE US IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF UN

OBSERVERS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, AND BELIEVES THAT AN EFFECTIVE UN PRESENCE THERE IS IN THE INTEREST OF PEACE. WE TRUST THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT SHARES THIS VIEW.

-- IT IS CLEAR FROM THE UN REPORT THAT MOST OF THE INCIDENTS OF INTERFERENCE WITH UN OFFICERS IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES OCCURRED IN CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED AREAS OF SOUTHERN LEBANON. THIS SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. THE US IS SUPPORTING UN EFFORTS NOW UNDERWAY TO STOP THIS HARASSMENT.

-- THE UN REPORT ALSO STATES THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF INCIDENTS DURING THE PERIOD JULY 1977 THROUGH FEBRUARY 1978 (77) OCCURRED IN PALESTINIAN-CONTROLLED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 059120

AREAS OF SOUTHERN LEBANON OR IN BEIRUT. WE HOPE THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IT CAN IN SUPPORT OF THE UN'S EFFORTS TO STOP SUCH INCIDENTS.

WE DO NOT WANT TO GET INTO THE DETAILS OF OUR DISCUSSIONS OF THE ISSUE WITH ISRAEL WITH THE SYRIANS, BUT IF ASKED, YOU MAY SAY THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE ISRAELIS ON THE SUBJECT AND THAT WE HAVE MADE OUR VIEWS CLEAR.

E) EMBASSY TEL AVIV SHOULD EXPRESS TO GOI OUR SERIOUS CONCERN AT NEW ELEMENT OF APPARENT DIRECT HARASSMENT OF UNMO'S BY ISRAELI MILITARY. IN ADDITION, YOU SHOULD ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN WHAT ACTIONS ISRAELIS HAVE TAKEN TO BRING CHRISTIANS UNDER CONTROL. OUR VIEW IS THAT, PARTICULARLY AFTER WOUNDING OF IRISH CAPTAIN (REFS F AND G), ISRAEL SHOULD INSIST THAT CHRISTIANS CEASE ALL HARASSMENT OF UNTSO IMMEDIATELY. YOU MAY IF ASKED TELL ISRAELIS IN GENERAL TERMS THAT WE ARE ALSO ASKING SYRIANS FOR THEIR HELP IN STOPPING HARASSMENT OF UNMO'S.

F) WE WILL BE FOLLOWING UP HERE ON NEW YORK TALKS WITH GOVERNMENTS THAT PROVIDE UNMO'S IN SOUTHERN LEBANON TO CONSIDER WHAT FURTHER ACTIONS MIGHT USEFULLY BE TAKEN TO TERMINATE THE HARASSMENT.
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